fillums and filluming

summer 2025

about the author

Michelle Pamela Lyons is determined to keep existing for as long as necessary. She has been producing art of some kind since childhood; more recently, she got good at it. Her physical form continues to be a work in progress.

about this zine

This publication consists of reviews of movies I saw from late 2024 to early summer 2025. About half way through there's a look at various Monty Python films (and not the ones you may be expecting). At the end, there's in-depth looks at three features that hold a lot of personal importance for me.

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
Dir: Stanley "Precise Instructions" Kubrick

I watched a 70mm print of this at the Prince Charles Cinema, mid afternoon on a now-typically scalding spring day. I nearly fell over on my way in trying to hold a door open for somebody, and then I sat in the wrong seat.

One of the first adverts at the screening was for some nonsense encouraging young college-age men and women to join The Wonderful World Of Advertising™ © ®. This made the man who I almost tripped up in front of to loudly mutter "fuck *OFF*". Fair comment, well made.

Although I think the weird and frankly deranged O2 advert that implies its phone services are equivalent to literal oxygen breathed by a newborn baby is worse. (Especially with the creepy voiceover, which made me think it was going to be a modern day PIF when I first saw it.) Then that Chocomel ad made me feel as if this was Stanley Kubrick Proudly Sponsored By Cbeebies.

Sadly, this screening did not allow John Waters to call us all assholes, which is my favourite of the PCC "don't be a bell-end" trailers.

After that point it was a full on revival screening. The curtains closed, the György Ligeti began. The house lights gradually faded out and the curtain lights slowly and subtly pulsed like flame. The music ended, the curtains opened again, and we got that excellent late 60s ultra-modish MGM logo, which I wish they'd bring back. (Out of focus for the first couple of seconds, but it was quickly corrected.)

At the time it had genuinely been years since I saw actual film projected. I think 2005 or 2006 was the last time I had visited a non-independent cinema that showed film on the regular, not very long before digital swamped everything. And, man, 70mm film looks lovely! Apparently the print being shown was an archive one found and slightly restored / fixed(?) by Christopher "Foldy Road" Nolan himself.

So I know I'm going to sick up a load of rancid film nerd cliches out of my cinematic beak, but I genuinely do love the texture of 70mm; the

manner in which a print's wear and tear temporarily accelerates just before a reel change, the faint flicker of an actual shutter, the way that film projector white seems more intense than digital white. Lovely.

[**Edit, with no apologies for high levels of nerdiness**: During the intermission, we kept hearing these immense CRACKS and THUDS, and at first I thought someone was trying to hammer a hole in the wall. I think it was coming from the sound system; perhaps the projectionist had to do some awkward audio source switching or something... they might have been pulling out and plugging back in cables out of a tape machine, and the analogue equipment reacted in its time-honoured "AAAGH CHRIST I THINK I'LL MAKE A LOUD NOISE NOW TO COPE WITH THIS" way. How the audio source worked is interesting, as the end music carried on way past the final credit and slowly faded out after the projector had been blocked off and the lights were back up. **Like I said, readers: no apologies, no refunds.**]

I'm not really going to say much about the film because I feel there's not much I can say about it. I have my issues with Kubrick as a director and human being. This is possibly my favourite movie out of his catalogue, because the obvious classical music picks and the special effects get to be the stars instead of the humans, with whom Stanley tended to have significant trouble.

Oh, and I saved the best moment for last: The intro music at the very start as we came in? The full version of "No Bulbs" by The Fall. No joke. I must have looked like a right twat trying and failing not to jig around in my seat to it.

Oxide Ghosts: The Brass Eye Tapes (2017)
Dir: Michael Cumming

A documentary about Chris Morris's legendary 1997 satirical news show Brass Eye, made by the show's director Michael Cumming. It's more of a clip-show consisting of out-takes, cut material and extended scenes than a strict documentary, but it's must-see viewing for British comedy fans for that reason alone.

None of what is shown in this has been released commercially, or is even available online for the most part. The documentary is only shown theatrically (with Morris's permission), and Cumming himself is at every screening, doing a Q+A after each one. I attended one of these screenings in early November 2024. I won't detail the exact contents of each clip or anything, but I will make some observations.

First, it's fascinating how so many famous moments from the series effectively began as beta versions, if you'll excuse the grotesquely tech-orientated term, which you really shouldn't. There's entire stretches which are like a compilation from a Brass Eye that exists in an alternate universe, with moments like the weasel fighting and the jam factory coming across as if viewed from a different angle.

On top of that, there's countless moments cut from well-known sketches (reports?) that are entirely up to standard. On that note, the early cut of the aforementioned jam factory sketch is vastly superior to the broadcast version, which takes place all across said workplace, and includes the "hibernation year" old lady from The Day Today as a receptionist!

Secondly - it's magical to see so many out-takes where Chris Morris just full on cracks up because something's gone wrong, or he gets too amused by something he's literally just come up with while on camera. Quite a few legendary lines begin as moments of inspiration that dissolve into laughter, and are then swiftly re-taken.

The Q+A afterwards at the screening I attended was great as well, and some interesting stuff was uncovered - and this is the only thing which I'll share, as it didn't come up in the film. There's an almost flash-frame like moment in the opening titles where (among Liam Gallagher flicking the V's and Morris dramatically turning and pointing) you can see an odd pink version of Cake in the hands of David Jatt.

Well, it turns out that was a prop originally created for an episode of Smith & Jones(!), and was in fact the inspiration for the whole idea of Cake when Morris spotted it on a shelf in the TalkBack Productions offices. As Cummings himself said to us, somewhere in an episode of Mel & Griff's 80s sketch show you might catch a glimpse of a large and strangely familiar pink tablet that would later cause questions to be asked in the Houses of Parliament, and change British TV comedy forever.

Megalopolis (2024)
Dir: Francis Ferdinand Von Count Chocula

PREVIEW:

I don't think I'm ever going to actually see this - if I wanted to watch a load of regressive confused neoliberal faff, I'd just pick a random Adam Curtis doc - but the trailer for this thing has the early 70s American Zoetrope logo at the start of it, looking all grainy and resolutely un-upscaled, just conventionally resized. I liked that, at least.

REVIEW:

...So I ended up seeing this anyway.

I was the only person in the audience, which they moved from one of the bigger screens to a much dinkier one. At the point where someone was meant to walk up to the screen and lipsync some lines, nothing happened because who could be fucking bothered to do that for this fucking pile of shit? Again, I was the only person in there.

Actually, I tell a small lie... two other women came in before the film began, and then left right away because they'd got the wrong screen. Apparently at theatrical screenings of this, the fake audience member thing was IMAX only.

Can I make a quick digression here? I might as well in a review of Megalopolis. I fucking hate IMAX, as cinema screens don't need to be that big. Those things mess around with my sense of perspective and give me panic attacks, genuinely. The only IMAX film I've ever seen was at the Science Museum, and the hugeness freaked me out so much I could

only bear to look at the bottom third of the screen, which at that point was displaying the entirety of the sun. Also the BFI IMAX cinema outside Waterloo Station once got plastered with a big advert for some Disney resort in Dubai - truly the happiest place on earth.

Right, back to the review. This is bad and terrible and confused and all over the place, but fuck me if one of the death scenes in this isn't one of the funniest things I saw in a movie during 2024. For the record, it's when some people abruptly mention that Dustin Hoffman's character has died, and then we get a two-second clip of Hoffman with rubble falling on him as he goes "AAAAGGH". Then we *immediately* cut back to the two people who were talking about it.

It's just a shame that it was meant to be serious. Yeah, yeah, John Voight as Robin Hood calling an arrow his boner... not exactly Blazing Saddles, is it? The only thing that's funny is that that line is delivered by a stupid old twat that in the context of a big massive self-important load of bullshit. Not just any load of bullshit, mind, but a load of bullshit that has the main female character recite three full quotes in a row from Marcus Aurelius, *with citations.*

Horrible, horrible, horrible. A disaster for the ages. A really stupid, easily preventable disaster, like that crashing Soviet satellite that everyone just forgets about half way through the movie.

But the American Zoetrope logo was still nice and fuzzy and non-upscaled at the start.

The Big Sleep (1946)
Dir: Howard Hawks

I watched this at a fairly full screening at my local Picturehouse on a Sunday afternoon (12pm on the dot - only two ads before the trailers! Hooray!). The audience I was in really enjoyed this. I was surprised at how much humour this film had; a lot of bone dry wit, mainly from Bogart and Bacall, mixed in with the usual double / triple crossings and smouldering glances and guns blasting away.

I lost track of the number of beautiful women just popping up all over the place. I also frequently lost track of the plot, and I'm glad everyone else who's reviewed this had a hard time following it because I thought I was stupid or something. I still got the overall jist, and the vibes and moody cinematography pulled me through those "hang on what's going on now?" moments.

There was also one odd little detail I enjoyed. Usually if a movie allows you to hear the other end of all the telephone conversations in it, the person on the line is the same volume as the main dialogue. Instead, they were all mixed at a volume that was pretty low, but was just clear enough that you could still make out what was being said! A slightly odd decision, but somehow it made one of the more overtly comedic back-and-forths in the first third of this extra amusing.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (1988)
Dir: Robert Zemeckis

Eight lanes of shimmering cement
running from here to Pasadena
Smooth, safe, fast
Traffic jams will be
a thing of the past

On and off
off and on all day
all night

A string of gas stations,
inexpensive motels
restaurants that serve
rapidly prepared food
Tire salons,
automobile dealerships,
and

wonderful, wonderful billboards
reaching as far
as the
eye
can
see.

My god,
It'll be
b e a u t i f u l

The Rubber-Keyed Wonder (2024)
Dir: Anthony Caulfield, Nicola Caulfield

A very enjoyable documentary, despite the faintly irritating quirks that all 21st Century documentaries feel the need to indulge in: the exact same sounding "haunting" two-note piano bit during pensive moments, colour grading crimes committed on stuff that's meant to look old, getting a subtitler who knows nothing about the subject to do the subtitles, etc. (I watched the Blu-Ray of this, so it wasn't down to somebody at Netflix.)

But yeah, I really liked it. I disagree with the review [on Letterboxd] that says this should have been only 90 minutes - the length was adequate for me. I will admit that it's clear that the producers were too eager to get their money's worth from the famous songs they licensed. We didn't need almost the whole of "The Land Of Make-Believe" over footage of Jetpac or whatever, much as I love that track.

So, a somewhat niche film, but I prefer odd niches these days above the grey slop thrown at us elsewhere. Also this is the first thing I've reviewed where I have seen / talked to a number of the people in it in real life.

Early Bird (1983) (Short)
Dir: Peter Lord, David Sproxton

A clear prototype for future Aardman work like Creature Comforts (both the original short and TV series). Lots of lovely little visual gags worked around an audio recording of the early breakfast show from Radio West, an independent British local radio station (i.e., not run by the BBC).

Looking up the history of the station online, it seems it launched in 1981 with some initial success but were always lagging behind the main two BBC stations they were up against (the national Radio One and the local BBC Radio Bristol). They were forced to merge with a neighbouring radio station in 1985. Odd how this short five-minute cartoon ended up giving it some form of immortality.

Scruffy (1980) (TV mini-series / TV Movie)
Dir: Ruby Spears Is The Name Of The Company

Some of the darker examples of children's media are in the territory of Watership Down. That's a bleak story in many ways, but a well-written and well-told one. Scruffy is an example of what you get when the same thing is attempted by a bunch of fucking idiots.

Also based on a British children's book (which I've never read), this animated TV movie is almost hilariously bad. Full of odd improbable moments and wretchedly manipulative plot points, it may not be the absolute nadir of Ruby Spears's output (that would probably be "Rubik The Amazing Cube" or something) but it's *reallllllllly* close.

Kiss Me Deadly (1955)
Dir: Robert Aldrich

The ultimate film noir. Ultimate as in *final.* The sound design at the climax is incredible. Sounds like nothing at the time, and even stands out now. If you've never seen it, go into it with as little information as possible.

Eraserhead (1977)
Dir: David Lynch

The problem with having Eraserhead as one of your favourite movies is that you can't just casually say it is to people, because they'll think you're a try-hard bellend. But it genuinely is one of my favourites! It's not even really "pretentious" at all - none of Lynch's film are - but you try telling that to Rich bloody Evans.

This review is partially based on the second theatrical screening I've seen. I've lost count of the times I've seen it on TV / VHS / DVD / Blu-ray. The previous one at the Prince Charles had an amazing atmosphere and the entire audience were completely into it. Watching it at my local Picturehouse was quite different as the audience seemed to be silent throughout. I sensed because they weren't impressed, although maybe they were simply unsettled. Maybe a little from Column A, and a little from Column B.

The main advantage of the Picturehouse screening, though, is that I was much closer to the screen this time round and noticed lots of little details I'd somehow never noticed before. Like how Mary's mother has some sort of bruising around her right eye, and the way she slowly starts to reach out to grab a man-made chicken just before Bill gives Henry the carving knives.

As for Mary herself, I noticed this time round how you very briefly see something in her ear during one of the first shots you see her in - cotton wool, I think, covering the painted ear infection Lynch applied to Charlotte Stewart for filming. As she later put it:

"[...] *The first thing David wanted to do the first day* [of shooting Eraserhead] *was to put what looked like an infection in my ear. So he got some glue and a little [painter's] brush and he spent 20 maybe minutes [painting in my ear]. I don't think anybody ever saw that, but I knew it was there, and I think it helped me feel a little bit more like Mary.*" (That's from welcometotwinpeaks.com.)

Lot more I could talk about, but I'll end it there. Not the warmest screening I've been to, but I'm glad I went anyway.

The Keep (1983)
Dir: Michael Mann

Fuck it, this is brilliant. Don't care about people saying it's incoherent. 5 out of 5 fucking stars. (The version I watched did restore a few recently recovered scenes, and those had some extra plot development, which I think helped.)

In this movie there are Nazis who get their heads exploded, and Nazis who get their souls sucked out through their faces disfiguring them in the process and *then* their heads get exploded, and Nazis who get their souls sucked out through their faces disfiguring them and then their *bodies* get exploded, and Nazis who presumably got their souls sucked out through etc etc etc and are found horribly mutilated.

Also: PINK LASERS.

Also, also: The main theme of the movie is about an uncanny form of utter evil dug up by evil psychopathic right wing bastards who don't know what the fuck they're doing, and once unleashed it slowly kills all of them, and it ends up having the potential to drive the rest of the entire human race to madness and ruin. This couldn't help but be intensely resonant for me in 2025.

Oh, and according to the credits this used the Theme from The Snowman at some point, apparently!? As in the Channel 4 Christmas animation. I didn't actually notice that. That might have been from one of the missing bits that earned the wrath of those fucking test audiences.

Absence of Satan (1985) (Short)
Dir: George Barber

I managed to find a copy of the LUX DVD this is on; it's the only thing I've watched from it so far.

A few of the edits play out awkwardly now. It sometimes does that same thing early sampling in music did where they'd hand-trigger bits of speech on a cheap sampler, but get the timing a bit wrong or repeat a single thing slightly too much.

Still, this is a good example of 80s British "scratch video" when that movement was nearing its peak. Considering this would have been done using 80s tech, when non-linear anything was still a good decade away for most, it's doubly impressive.

Highway Racer (1977)
Dir: Stelvio Massi

Absurd Italian police drama from the Seventies. Apparently not as nasty as these things often get, but has some amazing car chases and a daft hero who says at one point that a car is basically the most amazing horse you could imagine. Some of the humour actually works as intentional comedy, which is a plus.

The downsides of this film: This absolutely does not pass the Bechdel Test (yes the Bechdel Test isn't best used as a definitive guide to etc etc etc etc), and this movie has one of the most revolting ways of making a salami sandwich that I've seen in my life. Still, would recommend, even if you don't like cars. Which I don't. I've got a driving test coming up soon.

The Surfer (2024)
Dir: Lorcan Finnegan

AKA: *Surf Bogans Must Die; AKA Nicholas Cage Vs The Manosphere; AKA This Movie Gave Me A Fucking Headache*

Torpidly paced, faux-scary, horribly colour-graded shit. Despite sort of being a horror or a thriller or whatever, there's no scares - anything unsettling is replaced with stuff that's just unpleasant. I get what this movie is doing, but it's not doing it very well.

The commentary on weird fucked up men didn't really come off, and as noted in reviews over on Letterboxd, it's also one of those movies which was apparently written by someone who hates and fears Australia and everything in it. I might be wrong about that and will be happy to be corrected, but it has that weird Ozspliotation mood, and I'm not sure about the intentions behind everything here.

Also some of the camera moves gave me motion sickness. I had to run off to the cinema bathrooms because I was genuinely about to vomit like Cage's character was at around that bit. I wasn't feeling to great before that either. It was a hot day, I was overheating, and when someone ran past the screen (which happens in the second screen of the Prince Charles an awful lot for some reason) to rush to the toilet or something, the breeze they generated was as heavenly as the bit where Cage's character gets his car recharged and puts the aircon on Mega Blast.

The trailer led me to believe there would be more scenes of Nicholas Cage going apeshit; there was one longish one, and then some other stuff happened which was a letdown. Eventually the baddies finally got theirs

but I kind of didn't care anymore (although the head twat's quick brutal dispatch was pleasing at least) and I was thankful it was over.

I give this one star because there are some amusing moments. I did genuinely laugh out loud a few times, including the bits with the poor old rat. But!... overall this feels like a massive squandering of everyone's time, money, and effort.

(For some reason the audience all fucking clapped at the end. This movie did not deserve applause!)

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster (1964)
Dir: Ishirô Honda

At the screening I attended in April 2025, the subtitles for the bit where Godzilla and Rodan don't want to help was translated as something along the lines of "Mothra is trying to convince them, but humans are always bullying them, so why should they save the earth? They say they don't care!" I liked that this was followed by one of the human characters calling them both bastards.

And then Godzilla and Rodan both say they only want to help if the other apologises, and neither of them want to. I also liked the bit where Ghidorah shot a laser beam at Godilla's tummy, causing him some pain, and then Ghidorah shot him up the arse. Enormous fun.

Slade In Flame (1975)
Dir: Richard Loncraine

I'm not sure I totally agree with Mark Kermode's assertion that Slade In Flame is the Citizen Kane of rock movies. It's generally very good, but some script awkwardness does hamper it. On top of the more "debauched" moments being watered down a lot (presumably due to the then-young target audience), the film ends rather suddenly. It makes sense for it to end at that scene, but there's not enough build-up to it. Thematically it's great, but the pacing is off.

But aside from that and the 70s lads-lads-lads humour, this is otherwise a fun watch. I can overlook the film's flaws because there's still a lot to enjoy, particularly the cinematography. It's genuinely lovely - Northern England and the Midlands (as well as pre-80s London) look absolutely marvellous. It may be a bit shabby and run down and the factories look filthy, but ultimately it's still beautiful and ultimately alive.

Visually it's the kind of thing that a modern-day colour grader would take one look at, and then run away screaming declaring they could see new colours. The OST is also fantastic. My only complaint was at the screening I was at (my local Picturehouse) they didn't turn the volume up enough. The volume felt like a 6, let alone an 11.

An odd thing happens in this film on account of how they had to shoot it, which was done in between tours and various commitments. What's meant to be the band's home town ended up being shot across the Midlands, the North in general, and seemingly some bits of London. This creates a curious melding of regions location-wise, creating a kind of hyper-England: the band's first local small-time manager is a cockney, yet the band's families are mostly Brummies, and London never seems too far away.

The grit of the visuals struck me in quite a profound way. There's a bit where Noddy Holder's character makes a sarky joke about the quality (or lack thereof) of the wallpaper in one band member's living room. It made me think of how in the 21st Century we all live in places with eight foot high beige walls.

One thing I didn't initially pick up on was that the story is meant to occur over the final third of the sixties. The reason I didn't pick up on it is because almost everyone dresses like it's 1975, be they hip young thing or anyone else. Tom Conti at least looks like the kind of professional upper class man who could have looked the way he dresses at any point between 1966 and 1980, but Dave Hill's girlfriend, who is the only person who's wardrobe is designed to match the intended times, starts off with a mid-60s Swinging London look, and then ends up with long hair and a kaftan, which is somehow even more anachronistic in the context of 1975.

(Before I figured that out I was also struggling to see why a pirate radio station interview figured into the plot in a film that appeared to be mid-

70s; post-Marine Offences Act, well after the launch of Radio 1 and around the start of commercial radio.)

As I said, you don't see much throwing of tellies out of windows and all that. However the death of one character is genuinely quite gruesome, made all the more effective by the fact you don't clearly see it. (Also said character meets his demise shortly after trying to take photos of a naked woman *in his van,* which really adds to the grottiness).

I saw someone online claim that the actual Citizen Kane of rock movies is "Head" by the Monkees. I think I would go for that too, but Slade In Flame is certainly one of the better efforts. Maybe it's more of a “Tokyo Story” or a “Beau Travail”?

And may I just raise a glass of foaming nut-brown ale to Tommy Vance, looking utterly unlike how anybody remembers him. The Zapata moustache threw me off for a second, but that voice was unmistakable.

Quiet Please (1989) (Short)
Dir: Michael Grimshaw

Watched on Youtube as part of a three-film compilation, which is all it deserves.

When it started, I suddenly realised: *Oh, yeah. This fucking thing.* Channel 4 showed this and another of Grimshaw's cartoons around 1999 as part of an animation season of programmes. (It was the one where a baby gets microwaved or something. Can't be bothered looking up the title, it just exists). The channel treated Quiet Please as cheap filler in-between some other things that were actually worth watching.

This is emblematic of the kind of shite that passed for subversion in the late 80s and early 90s. It's basically the same as those really, really, *really* shit post-Viz "adult comics" you'd get like Zit and Pimple or whatever, none of which had an iota of the wit and comedic brilliance of Viz itself.

If you're not British I've completely lost you on that reference, so sorry about that. But speaking of obscure British references, another 90s thing it reminds me of are those T-shirts which had terrible cannabis puns printed

on them, or weird racist Black Bart Simpson drawings, or that astonishing A-Team one I've seen actual photographic proof of online recently, where the four main characters from the popular 80s action series are all in a kind of anal sex conga line. Pants round their ankles and everything.

And that actual real-world object is funnier simply for having once existed than anything in this film, you know? I mean, consider the whole process from beginning to end. First there's the fact that someone not only had the thought "Wouldn't it be great to have a T-shirt where The A-Team are all in an anal sex conga line", but then thought "I could *sell* that and make *money*!". And then they had to draw it (or pay an idiot ten quid to draw it) thus giving such a lamentable thing an actual physical presence outside of the mind of a twat.

And *then* they had to contact some T-shirt manufacturers (or his mate "Ginger Barry") to print it out on a a certain amount of T-shirts, work out the costs and how many they could make vs how much money they could bring in (or what they *thought* they could bring in), and then have them shipped out to a warehouse; then sell them via mail order in those sub-Viz knockoff mags (or on stalls on British seaside resorts, next to "Adihash" faux-sportswear and the aforementioned Black Bart Simpsons)...

And then the unavoidable fact, the sad and shabby truth: if anyone did buy them, they wore it once (if at all), everyone took the piss out of them, and that shirt would then languish at the bottom of a cupboard until finally conga-bumming its way into a landfill.

I'm pretty sure what I wrote up there is funnier than anything Michael Grimshaw has ever done ever, and I was basically just describing something I saw once and extrapolated how it came to be. If you know Michael Grimshaw, and he didn't die a while back from refusing a vaccine, then tell him all his cartoons are shit and not as funny as a T-shirt which has fucking drawings of the fucking A-Team doing each other up their Stephen J. Cannell Productions bumholes.

It was a really badly drawn A-Team, as well. I think they were portrayed giving the appalled viewer a friendly thumbs up.

IT IS
THE PARROT-FUCKING PANTY-SNIFFING CORPORATE MOTHERFUCKING OWL STRETCHING TIME

otherwise known as

IT'S (IT IS) [ELLIPSIS] THE PYTHON, MONTY SECTION (MONTY PYTHON)

featuring: no involvement from
John "Racism" Cleese
and Terry "I Hate Women Now" Gilliam,
while acknowledging the brilliance of their past selves
in the before times

How to Irritate People (1969)
Dir: David Agnew? Alan Smithee?

An intriguing and slightly nervously-performed collection of pre-Python material, produced mainly for the benefit of American TV, where it was apparently broadcast as a special presented by David Frost. Frost's links have been edited out of this version (though there is a credit for Frost's production company of the time), and it's understood that editing took place in the early 90s prior to coming out on home video in that decade.

Not the entire team are in this special – present are Cleese, Chapman and Palin, who are joined by Tim Brooke-Taylor, a very young looking Connie Booth, and assorted character actors of the time.

While I say the words "pre-Python material", strictly speaking that's not true as one sketch here (the Interview sketch) was recycled for Python in the first series, only with an expanded ending which deliberately papered over the punchline. Here Tim Brooke-Taylor plays the part later taken up by Graham Chapman.

When it comes to stuff you've not seen before, the best without a doubt is the Airplane sketch, though the rather pat punchline reminds you of how everyone involved was feeling a little restricted by convention prior to sitting down to watch Spike Milligan's "Q".

The Indian waiter sketch, on the other hand, is best skipped. And thrown in a bin. Adn then set alight, and then thrown right into the astonished faces of old fuckers online who whine about that bit in "The Germans" episode of Fawlty Towers where the Major says "*fannies*" being BANNED, although it hasn't. Speaking of which!

Monty Python's Fliegender Zirkus (1972) (TV special)
Regie: Erm, don't know

Two German TV specials, strung together for release on DVD. Some generally very good material, although arguably the requirement in the first one for the Pythons to phonetically learn and repeat German translations of their own material causes problems in the performances.

With the second one, everything was delivered in English, and subtitled in German.

I love seeing some random German TV announcer getting the same kind of treatment that Python gave to various BBC faces. Note: Some segments from this were recycled for the Hollywood Bowl performance.

Ending It All (1970)
Dir: A scarecrow outside the ICI building, or something, I dunno

A typically eerie Seventies-era British PIF (Public Information Film, the UK equivalent of an American PSA), initially bleakly humorous and then just bleak. Of course, that's by design.

I found it interesting how the familiar face of Palin felt reassuring at first, only for all that to give way when it came to the ending. It's nowhere near as brutal as some other PIFs from the same time period, but it's notable for Palin's involvement.

The Great Birds Eye Peas Relaunch (1971)
Dir: Decimalisation

Carol Cleveland gets horny, Eric Idle plays a fairy godmother for a second time. (The first was in the show itself.) Not as good as "proper Python", as Mel Smith As Alexander Walker would say; the sexism gets dialled up for the benefit of the salesmen this industrial film was intended for, and it's also a bit oddly filmed at points, although that aspect is very amusingly lamp-shaded at the start.

I did find something enjoyable about the very long bit of pea delivery / preparation business at the end, but your mileage will vary, as they say on TV Tropes.

AND NOW, IT'S

...A BULLET FROM A FUCKING GUN, FUCKER! YOU RECEIVE A LOVE LETTER FROM ME, YOU'RE FUCKED FOREVER! YOU UNDERSTAND, FUCK? *I'LL SEND YOU STRAIGHT TO HELL, FUCKER!*

Operation Warzone (1988)
Dir: David A. Prior

Despite this being made by an actual Vietnam vet, this is one of the most unrealistic and baffling war movies ever. I cannot stress enough how extraordinary it is that this was made by someone who apparently actually went to Vietnam. It's like a piss-take of the whole thing half the time. It's fun, though! It's the best kind of bad movie – intensely confusing but entertaining.

The script to this appears to have been transcribed by someone rambling out loud in their sleep. Apparently it's some sort of commentary on the Iran Contra affair which was in the news at the time, but they've set it in Vietnam for some reason, like your dreaming brain would do during a fever. As a result the point the movie is trying to make is utterly muddled.

Characters appear to die but then are alive again, or maybe they're just another person who looks the same, but then it turns out it was a ploy to pretend they're dead due to the twist at the end. Boobs are seen for 1.2 seconds in the third act, which was apparently promised on the VHS release's back cover using a shot of the actress involved. Said actress has enormous back-combed mid-80s hair during what's meant to be 1975.

Random cannon fodder types who get shot then re-appear later on, because they're probably meant to be different people. Deadly electric (or poison-tipped?) spikes in a trap set in a tunnel are survivable if you just lightly brush under them with your hat on. Play-doh is used to simulate plastic explosives.

The best thing about the movie, as pointed out by everyone who's seen it, is of course the soundtrack. It consists of perfectly normal 80s stock music which get used at entirely the wrong moments. One scene with a lot of moody stalking through the jungle is scored with an instrumental rip off of Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go; a fist fight features what I can only describe as wistful aerobics music; the end theme is called "This Is The Love I Dreamed About".

Also someone called Peggy Sellers was apparently the script supervisor. She did no such thing. I refuse to accept that she did her job at all.

The Bitter Tears Of Petra Von Kant (1972)
Dir: Rainer Werner Fassbinder

Saw this at the Prince Charles. Brilliant film, but had to endure a shitty audience who laughed at stuff that wasn't meant to be funny, because many cinemagoers these days are terrified of actual emotions. It was all men who were chuckling away as well, AGAIN. I still liked it, but I'm going to have to give this another watch sometime in more sympathetic circumstances.

(By the way, content warning: halfway through this, the main… antagonist?… uses some deeply unpleasant racial language. I thought you need to be aware of that.)

EXTRA! OBLIGATORY NOTHINGY ONE-LINER FOR LETTERBOXD POWER USERS: *Turns out I open envelopes the same way as Petra Von Kant does.*

A Rough Sketch for a Proposed Film Dealing with the Powers of Ten and the Relative Size of Things in the Universe (1968)
Dir: Charles Eames, Ray Eames

This is the first go at a famous scientific short film – the cinematic equivalent of a pilot episode. Despite calling itself a "rough sketch", which implies mere test footage, this is more complete than you might be expecting. This has opening and closing credits, narration (also on the later 1977 version, the more famous "Power Of Ten") and a musical score by Elmer Bernstein. On top of that, this was apparently shown for several years at the Ontario Science Center!

The 1977 film may indeed be more accurate, better looking and streamlined and all that, and that does seem to be the better-remembered one. However, I loved this initial attempt a lot more, basically for all the stuff that others criticise about it. That view mainly focuses on the idea that too much is presented here: the clocks on the side spinning around like mad, plus the much rougher black and white visuals.

Some see these as distractions, and that removing them refined the later film. People are obviously entitled to their opinion, but personally I view all the "additional" stuff as helping to further create a feeling of overwhelming awe. I also vastly prefer the calm, flat (almost serene) narration compared to the more alert manner it's delivered in 1977.

When that's added on top of Bernstein's electronic score (which was re-used in the update), this is *emotionally* the superior film. I realise that may sound an odd thing to say as this is more restrained in tone and is much cruder visually, but to me it's utterly dazzling, and I can't help but prefer it.

Confessions of a Dangerous Mind (2002)
Dir: George Clooney

(Watched as part of The Prince Charles Cinema Mystery Movie Marathon.) Chuck Barris is a US TV veteran who's responsible for coming up with the formats of many American TV shows, and occasionally presenting some of them. The most notorious of them must be The Gong Show, a talent contest custom-made for the coked-out and cynical 70s. Barris is also kind of a massive fuck-up.

Weirdly enough I'd seen "The Gong Show Movie" years and years ago on. .. Channel 4? Sky Movies? Very early morning, as well, which was appropriate. I found that an odd enough experience, and this goes some way to besting it, but not quite. The entire movie is based on a partially-fictitious memoir Barris wrote in the 80s. You can tell the bits that are made up because they involve him being a secret assassin for the CIA.

Naturally, the script was written up by Charlie Kaufman, with Sam Rockwell as Barris; the other members of the cast include Drew Barrymore, Julia Roberts, and George Clooney who takes up a dual actor / director position. The result is an often entertaining if not actually good movie, with more than its fair share of meta moments.

The best one of the latter is the scene where a gun-wielding Barris has a nervous breakdown during a Gong Show taping, threatens the Unknown

Comic, and then hallucinates stuff like the entire audience lying dead covered in blood. The actual best bit of the entire movie is this final part of narration at the end, written by Barris (and yes, this is a mild spoiler):

Y'know, I came up with a new game show idea recently. It's called The Old Game. You got three old guys with loaded guns on stage. They look back at their lives, see who they were, what they accomplished, how close they came to realizing their dreams. The winner is the one who doesn't blow his brains out. He gets a refrigerator.

(Charlie Kaufman's script called for this last bit to be followed by a freeze-frame of Chuck Barris smoking a cigar. It actually ends on the real Barris with his head practically in his hands, looking utterly haunted.)

Unforgiven (1992)
Dir: Clint Eastwood

(Watched as part of The Prince Charles Cinema Mystery Movie Marathon.) Much better than what I would have expected a Clint Eastwood-directed film to be. It was interesting how the plot was fuelled practically from the start by all these unintentional, seemingly automatic exaggerations of things that the characters learnt of second-hand. Shortly after my viewing I thought that I wouldn't view this as an outright classic, but over time elements of it have percolated in my mind to the point that I think this might be Eastwood's best film.

Roadgames (1981)
Dir: Richard Franklin

(Watched as part of The Prince Charles Cinema Mystery Movie Marathon.) A pretty amazing find that I'd never heard of before. Having two American actors in this otherwise very Australian film made for a really interesting dynamic. It helps that one of them is Jamie Lee Curtis, only a few years after making Halloween.

There's some odd, out of place touches at points which really stuck out.

The grim conclusion to the first scene had a single shot in it that felt like it was by a completely different director who wanted to be making an effects-heavy sci-fi horror; also there is a bewildering use of a very silly sound effect when you least expect it.

Death Promise (1977)
Dir: Robert Warmflash

(Watched as part of The Prince Charles Cinema Mystery Movie Marathon.) An enormously entertaining combination of 70s NY blaxsploitation and general marital arts business. I thought this was really good fun. It did slow down a fair bit in the second act, but got its shit back together again for the finale. The very, very long finale.

You know how people say that some movies feel like they have scripts that were "written by aliens"? This was like it was written by a ten year old boy. There was a lot of strange redundant dialogue, and people being astonishingly easily convinced to join in on the murderous rampage against some cartoonishly nasty landlords. I mean, fair enough.

This also has one of the funniest training montages ever, and a couple of very imaginative deaths for the bad guys. One old guy near the start did an amazingly bad but very entertaining job of trying to pretend he was being mugged, which was so rubbish it was almost like he was being sarcastic even though he wasn't.

One of my favourite bits of this whole movie was the part where the big twist was given away (Accidentally? Intentionally? I'm not sure) in the first act, when they show the identity of the bad guy in a brief cutaway. I think they tried to disguise it by using shallow focus. (An audience member at the screening I was at actually gasped when they recognised the character.) He's always stroking a cat like Blofeld does, because why not?

Austin Powers in Goldmember (2002)
Dir: 9/11

I've only seen bits of this before, and the whole thing was as rubbish as I imagined it was. This is the overripe, on-the-turn final installment of the Austin Powers series. (At least for now? There's talk of another sequel. Of course! Of course.)

I enjoyed the first one, and the second one had its moments. (I saw the latter on its original release at some multiplex or other, because the other choice at the time was "Doug's First Movie"). This sorry entry is weighed down by some grimly 2000s humour, endless miserable celebrity cameos, and a fucking rap parody.

There are a few decent-ish laughs scattered about, I guess. I was genuinely amused... three or four times? But that's a poor showing for a feature length film.

Speaking of which, we briefly get to see Kevin Spacey as a genuine Dr Evil, and the character of "Fat Bastard" makes a reference to Jared from Subway. If you don't know who Jared from Subway is, you're going to be really depressed by the Wikipedia page about him!

What's Up: Balloon to the Rescue! (2009)
Dir: IT DOESN'T MATTER

A diabolical 3D animated rip-off of Pixar's "Up", which is an insult not just to the original film, and not just to the medium of animation, but all of humanity. The lack of effort and total contempt for the audience is breath-taking. Actually genuinely disgusting. There's a racist bit at one point.

On one hand, this is only 45 minutes long. On the other hand, this is an entire 45 minutes long.

Chungking Express (1994)
Dir: Wong Kar-wai

I give three stars to this movie only for the first story. The second part of this movie was a more or less unrelated movie tacked on to the opening, with a single location as the link. This second story went on for so long in comparison to the first bit it lost me, mainly because I couldn't stand the Manic Pixie Dipshit Girl who gets introduced. At one point she actually goes and fucking drugs the man she's in love with! I spent five minutes after that thinking "did she just kill him and take over his apartment?", because that was the impression it gave me.

Some really great cinematography, of course, especially given this was done in 1994 when that sort of kyper-kinetic style was very new. But yeah, the screeching change to "now the film is about this guy and this annoying Dolores O'Riordan wannabe who keeps fucking playing California Dreaming all the fucking time" wrecked it a bit. (She does a good attempt at copying the vocal style of "Dreams", mind you.)

Memories (1995)
Dir: Katsuhiro Otomo, Koji Morimoto, Tensai Okamura

A really good anthology film, but I felt it would have worked better if the positions of the first and third parts (or "episodes") had been switched. I'm reminded that recently I read some advice from a stand-up comedian to other stand-ups; he said you should start with your best joke, and end with your second-best joke. Something similar applies here, although you may disagree with me on that.

Blow Up (1966)
Dir: Michelangelo Antonioni

I first watched this years ago in a media studies class, which ended up being less than ideal conditions to see a movie with any level of seriousness. Everybody laughed at everything because *ha ha ha the Sixties!* So today I caught a screening of it to finally watch it properly... and there was still laughter, but less of it at least.

So, it turns out this isn't much good. It's one of those art films I can kind of appreciate but too many things bring it down. The slow long-take vaguely dreamy feel of it is actually quite engrossing at points, and I did go into this knowing that there wasn't going to be a proper ending. In the end it's all messed up with too many other things that interfere with what could have been good. There is the savig grace of there being a lot of really great cinematography and all these fantastic shots of pre-80s London.

Also what is with all 60s art-house film male leads being total fucking tools? And the main character in this is the shittest detective ever, as well as displaying an alarming lack of self-preservation. Given the events he ends up photographing, he ends up being pretty lucky that he doesn't get himself killed.

On top of this, the very dry "satire" could have only been made by an aging Italian film director in the 1960s. None of it is funny, and is only amusing in a sort of unintentional "No, it's the children who are wrong" kind of way, only this is the version you got of that over 50 years ago.

Oh, and nobody at a Yardbirds gig would be just fucking standing around like lemons. Fuck off, Antonioni, that never happened. You told them to do that. Fuck you.

Six Men Getting Sick (1967)
Dir: David Lynch

I saw this on the big screen for the first time at the Prince Charles Cinema, at a program of Lynch's shorts. It was a partially restored version, with some interesting details that differed to the DVD version I've seen before.

The sculptured head bits looked like PNGs pasted on top of the film, with an additional layer of film decay / grime seemingly composited on top of it and everything else. I guess that was to simulate the way the original sculptured screen would have looked like with this on it, but oddly these digital layers were switched off for the brief flash of red.

Another odd thing about this was that one half of the sixth head on the right was static in the same PNG-esque way, remaining in place when I think it shouldn't have. Was that a feature I've never noticed before, or was there some sort of technical compromise in the preparation of this version?

Finally the bit where the bucket of fire or whatever it is falls out of view doesn't get briefly paused here. Instead it cuts straight to what you could say was the money shot, only the first second of it's played at half speed to make up the tiny bit of lost time.

I really loved how this was the first part of the screening, because it came almost right after the long bit of TM spiel full of medical workers saying how they feel much better after meditating. *Reduction in PTSD symptoms. Reduced insomnia. Higher levels of job satisfaction.* We sat through all that, and then suddenly *WWWWEEEEEEOOOOOO* WATCH WATCH WATCH BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD SICK SICK **SICK**

PlayTime (1967)
Dir: Jacques Tati

The most gentle comedy movie I've ever seen. This kept threatening to combust into actual chaos (and therefore, actual comedy), but it simply never got there.

It is certainly charming. I was never really bored at any point, although I did start to get antsy when I realised the film was ending but really dragging its heels in doing so.

Despite the dazzling set design and the immense amount of choreography that must have been required to shoot everything, I never really laughed. The only thing I actually found funny was the drunk bloke who kept falling off his chair in the very very long second half of the film.

Otherwise, it feels like 95% of the humour in this is along the lines of "this ordinary thing makes a funny noise".

Harvey (1950)
Dir: Henry Koster

For some reason I've not got much to say about this absolutely wonderful film. I like how the final piece of the plot falls into place via that initially surly cab driver, with a quote for the ages (among all the other quotes for the ages from this same movie) about "perfectly normal human beings!".

One thing just occurred to me. If this were made now, it would be picked up by an indie distributor, marketed as an "indie" film, maybe even put out by A24 or whoever. In 1950, this was just a good movie starring a major actor of the time, and went out through Universal.

Harriet At Play (1975)
Dir: Tony Palmer

...Whether you feel it or not, you've got to be happy.

An astonishing half-hour of unrelenting 70s Britishness (or perhaps more accurately, Englishness). This was part of a TV series made for the ITV Network (the commercial rival to the BBC) directed by Tony Palmer. He's perhaps most celebrated for Frank Zappa's 200 Motels, but he's done a lot of other rock movies / documentaries too. The Harriet of the title is the presenter of this and all the other episodes, and this edition has her interviewing both staff and holidaymakers at the Butlin's Holiday Camp in Minehead, Somerset.

If you're not from the UK, you won't have the faintest idea of what Butlin's even is. The Wikipedia entry only kind of covers the surface and doesn't really go anywhere near its cultural meaning. So: Butlin's was a pioneering holiday company who built many holiday camps in Britain, usually at seaside resorts. It was founded by Billy Butlin in 1936, and it particularly took off in the brave new post-war world of the 50s; but with the gradual break down of the post-war consensus, it rapidly fell into irrelevance at the dawn of the 1980s. Yet it remained popular despite everything, and even today still exists, although now in a kind of living death. And it must be said that even back in Seventies Britain it was starting to look pretty shabby.

I went to this exact Butlin's camp in this documentary decades later, around 1995. It had sort of moved with the times, in that the TV you had in each chalet now had four channels instead of three; part of the entertainment hall shown here was by then filled with arcade machines (including a non-working "Time Traveler" by Sega); and the camp cinema showed a print of the first Wayne's World movie. But the vibe still remained to an extent.

This documentary focuses a lot on some Butlin's employees known as "redcoats". These are the main public-facing workers at all Butlin's camps, and all holiday camp companies formed after Butlin's have their own forms of redcoats. Their job is to be happy, and to enforce happiness. That might sound a bit over the top, but on the quiet that is what it's all about.

Butlin's was about "fun", and order; the latter outstrips the former in importance. At times it feels more like being in the army than a holiday, or it did before the 80s. This was not an unheard-of opinion - the comedian Eric Sykes once dedicated an entire episode of his BBC sitcom, made during the same time period as this, to making fun of a thinly disguised version of Butlin's. He rebels against the company and causes camp-wide disarray simply by spending every day in bed.

Speaking of which, one curious thing to note is that some British light entertainers from the mid-20th Century cut their teeth not on the stage or in comedy clubs, but at Butlin's. This is actually mentioned by one redcoat as part of the reason he's working there. He adds: "Everybody

wants to be somebody... everybody wants to be stood up on a pedestal and everybody worshipping them."

In this film Harriet is given the opportunity to be a redcoat, and does the job more or less for real throughout. It's the kind of setup we've seen in so many documentaries down the years, but here the conceit is used as a weapon. In the course of her duties and across many interviews, Harriet almost accidentally uncovers all sorts of weird thoughts in the minds of both staff and tourists alike. If the management of Butlin's thought this would be a good advert for their business, they must have been outraged.

The rapid and restless editing, the startling avant-garde sound design, the way the camera is continually getting into everyone's faces all combine to peel back the overwhelming conformity and induces an overpowering claustrophobia: holiday as society as law as control. The use of John Lennon's "Working Class Hero" on the soundtrack acts a sharp rejoinder to those who would accuse this documentary of being against the working class. One employee casually and genuinely compares the paying customers as "sheep", in a bizarrely pleasant manner: "They want someone to tell them what to do, when to do it and how to do it". The worst thing is that when it comes to the visitors here, they're right.

As a result it's a huge irony that this very camp would, around the 2000s, play host to many of the alt / underground music festivals held by All Tomorrow's Parties. The grim yet lurid halls you see here later played host to performances by The Butthole Surfers, The Damned, Yo La Tengo, Meat Puppets, Ghost, Shellac, Squarepusher, Alan Vega, Einstürzende Neubauten, and Joanna Newsom amongst many others.

There is one moment at the very start where we get what appears to be a full actual 30-second spot for Butlin's, presumably regularly shown at the time in conventional ad breaks. This was possibly included as a sop to an upset holiday company. Otherwise, the following exchange between Harriet and a redcoat is typical of the madness. She's asking questions about the deranged "Happiest Family" competition, in which families were invited to be judged on being the absolute and most content in the camp.

HARRIET: How are any of these judges going to decide what makes a happy family from just looking at people?

REDCOAT: We obviously don't want a mother and father that are [*sic*]... a white and a black child.

HARRIET: Why not?

REDCOAT: Why not? Because... it, er, can't be a true child of the two parents - we can't have foster children or adopted children. It's got to be a blood... connection.

HARRIET: And why is being dressed alike…

REDCOAT: [*talking over Harriet*] ...It helps!

HARRIET: ...Have anything to do with whether you're happy?

REDCOAT: It helps. It helps the presentation. You can tell if a smile is false...

THREE VERY PERSONALLY IMPORTANT FILMS

Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (1982)
Dir: Robert Altman

What used to be the front,
was lying on the ground,
rotting in the hot sun.

Do you know what I did?
Do you know what I managed to do?

I managed to retrieved one
identifiable piece of that home.
It's one of them little pieces
I'm pretty sure,
was one of those little pieces
on top of the porch roof.

I really have to dig among
the piles of destruction
to find the one that had the
slightest bit of recognition.

Look here.

Ain't that beautiful.

"..Some of those you got from
other years are better."

This movie began as a play by Ed Graczyk. It was first performed in 1976 at the Players Theatre Columbus in Columbus, Ohio. The movie adaption was produced in 1982, and directed by Robert Altman.

This knocked me for fucking six. The moment where Joanne is weeping, hugging Mona who is coldly looking away… I couldn't quite look at the screen at that point. It's too much, yet I'm glad I witnessed it. To know what I'm going on about, watch the movie.

Sometimes in my reviews I'll focus on technical details, and sure, I can give you some here. The way the on-stage optical illusions were achieved on film was very well-done. The theatrical origins are clear in the way it's all shot…

Ahhhhh, blah de fucking blah! I can't really be bothered about sweating the technical stuff this time, it seems pointless. It's actually taken me a couple of months to get my head into a place where I can dare to write all this down. I know that sounds stupid. Like I said, this knocked me for six.

This is not a perfect movie. It's complicated, messy, and yes, dubious at times. It doesn't get a complete pass at everything, seeing as it's a script from 1976 filmed in 1982. There are certainly faults in this film, I can't deny that. But it doesn't matter, not to me at least. Ultimately it's astounding.

I couldn't get it out of my head all the way back home. I can't quite put it into words for once. This *crackles* with life.

Carrie (1976)
Dir: Brian De Palma

Carrie is one of those films you feel you've already seen even if you literally haven't, simply through experiencing the many references to it in countless other movies / TV shows / whatevers produced since 1976. But this is a film that really needs to be seen in full. Unlike some movies where a Cliff's Notes level of understanding will suffice, this becomes far more impressive when seen as one complete story rather than in the form of easy reference comedy in a lazy sketch show.

The thing that really struck me about it was the sense of tragedy throughout. In fact the movie becomes even weightier for a modern day audience who will go into it knowing the basic outline. The sense of doom is magnified far more than it would have been for audiences almost 50 years ago; they might have thought that despite the machinations of the worst group of teenage girls ever, something might happen that would save Carrie, and that she might have a chance of some kind of happy ending...

It was during a scene dealing with Carrie's confidence being built up by the gym coach that I actually started to tear up. I was surprised at how strongly I identified with the main character - how bad I felt for her, and (now I'm bringing my own personal baggage into it) how all the basic little things about being a teenage girl (which the movie communicates so well, despite the cultural / historical differences) were locked off from me by a simple accident of birth.

It's horrible growing up as a woman. It absolutely is. But...

I felt like I was right there in that madly spinning and seemingly endless shot halfway through the prom, holding onto someone while the world went crazy around me. It's an incredible moment, it has to be said. Carrie and Tommy dancing in the hall, so happy and radiant, oblivious to the way the very space in which they're occupying seems to be having a panic attack. It feels both giddy and threatening, because that's precisely what it is. And as this happens, there seems to be not a single other soul present.

And of course there's that ending. It says something that the main bit people took from this back in the day was the jump scare at the very end, which again everyone nowadays knows about. While that may have been robbed of its power in its original context as a ground-breaking jolt of terror, now it feels more like a necessary full stop to the sadness, abuse and trauma that's just occurred.

It's not that there aren't any other horror movies that employ sadness and tragedy in such a way, but it must be said that there aren't many of them. The closest I can think of to this is "Hausu", the famed Japanese cult horror that came out about a year after Carrie did. Not only did I find the ending of that film deeply melancholy, but Hausu also employed bright Technicolor palettes and vivid lighting in a way that would cause... ooh I don't know, every single director of every 21st Century horror movie ever to have a screaming fit.

Sometimes dark spaces work. On rarer occasions, grinding nihilism does as well. But when it comes down to it, actual humanity and colour makes it all hit so much harder.

After the movie ended the rest of the audience at my screening (mostly if not entirely college students) remained sitting, enthusing over the film and

discussing this and that as the end credits rolled. Once the lights went up, I got going but they remained, talking excitedly. It's things like that make you think the power of cinema isn't completely extinguished, despite the movie industry's continued fuckwittery.

Funeral Parade of Roses (1969)
Dir: Toshio Matsumoto

I wish the whole country would sink underwater.

An astounding piece of work. Obviously the terminology / levels of understanding are very much Of Their Time (TM), or are confused by cultural barriers. The ending may also end up being too much for some people, which I can understand. I'm not a fan of it myself, to be honest. Everything else still points to a potential future, and a dazzling one at that.

The visuals function like how my mind's eye works. Things popping up at odd times, commenting on / inspired by what I'm seeing or feeling. When we finally get to see it, the underground movie within the movie was like a proto-Japanese noise experience. Another bit of music in the dance freakout scene might as well be Les Rallizes Dénudés. Maybe it is!

In regards to the screening I attended, the juxtaposition between this and all the trailers and adverts beforehand was quite something. The commercials were nothing but pure late-capitalism desperation, and the pompous trailers were just a guide in avoiding things that weren't as good as this. Digital Cinema Media's 15-years-past-the-sell-by-date dubstep jingle cannot compete with "O Du Lieber Augustin" played through a rapidly oscillating tremolo pedal.

Frightening! The cursed destiny of man. What a composite of cruelty and laughter! Let's look forward to the next film. Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.

THESE
LAST
FEW
PAGES
ARE
FILLED
WITH
RANDOM
STUFF
BECAUSE
I'VE
RUN
OUT
OF
REVIEWS

FARTS OF DARKNESS

Bernard Manning and Les Dawson should not have been sharing the same car, but they were. They should not have been going up the M1 to the same club, but that was what was happening. Seemingly the same to the untrained observer, the pair could hardly have been more different.

“You remember to pack your dresses?” said Bernard.
“Don’t be bloody pathetic,” said Les.
“Well, you write books. I know what writers are like. Can’t be doing with reading myself, the paper’s fine for me.”
“I know, I’ve seen your act.”

The car radio was tuned to Radio 4. “This is Radio 4 on Medium Wave. Bernard is currently seething inside at that last remark. In half an hour there’ll be the shipping forecast, but first, the racing. Lundy, very large horses, tiny men, lots of pain. German Bight, SAT-1, a load of girls on a boat, 24 hours of rock…”

"We're nearing a branch of Julie's Pantry," said Bernard.
Les scoffed. "You’ve eaten plenty of chicken and chips already, you fat fool."
"Chickens are an optional diet," Bernard said.

Chickens are an optional diet...?, thought Les.
Why the bloody hell did I say that?, thought Bernard.

Les drifted off into thoughts of Paris in the decades and years before The Microchip Age, and Page 3 models with big hair...

"They're meat," he blurted out. “All just meat.”

Too close to the knuckle, thought Les. *Maybe it’s because I’m tired. And that bastard’s probably tired too. He’d better not drive this car off the road. Why’s nothing playing on the radio? Is there a fault at their...*

The radio began to play a song. It was “I Play The Spoons”, by Clive Dunn. One of the stars of Dad’s Army, one of Britain’s most beloved sitcoms. They’d both met him a bunch of times, Les had talked to him the most. Clive was a much younger man than the character he played on television, imitating a typical sort of duffer older than even they were now.

It wasn’t a good song, and it eventually winded down to its tired end. “I play the spoons,” sang Clive in a mournful tone.

Les felt disturbed by that ending. Something about Clive’s vocal tone sounded so exhausted... haunted, even vaguely malevolent. He imagined Clive expiring as he sang that, in a church hall somewhere; falling over in slow motion at the final word, smoke pouring out of his mouth like an escaping soul, his body shrivelling up and browning like a mummified Pepperami...

And when he hit the floor, he didn't simply hit it, he went straight through the boards with the force of a ten-ton weight. For some reason this was sound-tracked in Les's mind with the noise of a provincial swimming pool, kids yelling and splashing and lifeguards barking *DON'T RUN*. Everything was still in slow motion – this ghastly reverie demanded it.

Now there was an instant replay shot from a camera underneath, looking up at a bright gaping hole splintering horribly through blessed darkness, an elongated meat stick dropping through like a turd.

Daylight streaming in. A woman's face. She is screaming the words: "***Jung once had visions of God shitting on a cathedral...***"

The sound of Bernard making electrical crackling noises snapped Les out of it.

Bernard's head was juddering like rubber, his lips parted and speckled with froth, jaw wide open. His eyes were looking ahead at something that was not actually in front of them. His clothes were drenched in sweat as sparks flew from his teeth, and his throat made a sound like chicken frying in a giant pot of fat.

The first thought that Les had was that he couldn't understand how a human being could make that noise. His second thought was: *We're driving at full speed along the hard shoulder and we're about to go off the road.*

Les grabbed the wheel and shoved them back into the fast lane. Bernard instantly snapped back into normality. He shook his head, sweat flying off him like a wet dog drying itself.

"You absolute idiot!" roared Les.
"I was in complete control!" shouted Bernard. "I was, and still am."
"How the bloody hell did you make those noises?" demanded Les. "Why were you making those noises?"

Bernard wasn't aware he had been making any noises, but for some reason he couldn't fire back at Les with an entry from his mental catalogue of sub-witticisms. Bernard started to worry. The sensation was oddly physical - like his body now contained something.

On they drove, into the night.

HEAVY WAVE
ANYONE MIGHT BUY A DONKEY DERBY PROGRAMME.
THREE PENCE EACH. COULD WIN A HOLIDAY.
I'M NOT LISTENING. THEY'RE COMPLETELY IGNORING YOU.

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

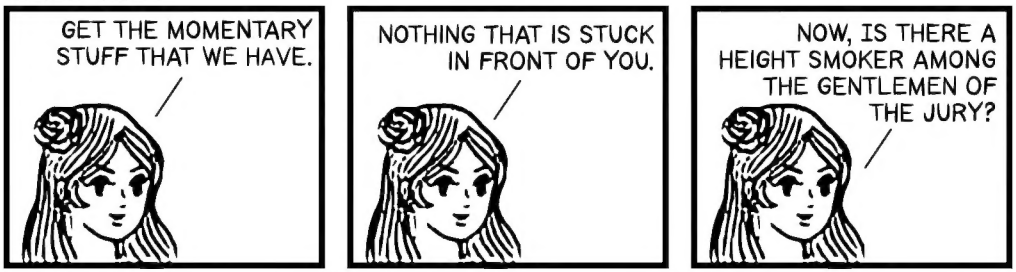
HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE


GET THE MOMENTARY STUFF THAT WE HAVE.
NOTHING THAT IS STUCK IN FRONT OF YOU.
NOW, IS THERE A HEIGHT SMOKER AMONG THE GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY?

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

HEAVY WAVE

ABC 1 2 & 3
PUTNEY 788 3003

1 Week. com. Sun., May 22
Separate Programmes
CARQUAKE (A)
Sun. 5.45, 9.10
Week 4.00, 9.00
PLUS
GIANT SPIDER INVASION (A)
Wk. 2.30 7.30 Sun 5.15 7.40
Evening seats bookable

2 Separate Performances
MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (A)
Sun. 5.05, 8.30
Week 2.05, 5.05, 8.20
Progs: Sun 4.15, 7.45
Week. 1.55 4.15, 7.45
Evening seats bookable

3 Separate Programmes
ZOLTAN . . . HOUND OF DRACULA (X)
Sun. 8.10 Week 4.10, 9.10
PLUS
THE KILLER INSIDE ME (X)
Sun 7.20 Week 2.20, 7.20
Evening seats bookable

LATE NIGHT SHOW
FRIDAY, MAY 27
Open 11.00 Com 11.15 pm
SLEEPER (A) PLUS
Adolf Hitler—My Part In His Downfall (A)

Progs subject to possible change

GRANADA
KINGSTON
546 0404

1 Sun 22 May 7 days
DAVID CARRADINE
CARQUAKE a
2.30 5.40 8.30 Sun 5.55 8.
GIANT SPIDER
INVASION a
4.15 7.20 Sun 4.30 7.30

2 Sun 22 May 7 days
SISSY SPACEK
CARRIE x
1.40 5.20 9.00 Sun 4.50 8.30
JIM MITCHUM
TRACKDOWN x
3.30 7.05 Sun 5.40

3 Sun 22 May 7 days
SECRETS OF A CALL GIRL x
2.15 5.45 9.05 Sun 3.15
VIOLENT PROFESSIONALS
4.00 7.20 Sun 7.00

YOU MISS A LOT IF YOU MISS THE WEDNESDAY COMET!